

MUNICIPAL CONSOLIDATION.

DISCUSSION OF THE SUBJECT BEFORE THE COMMISSION.

The Municipal Consolidation Commission met yesterday morning at 216 Broadway. A bare quorum was present, consisting of Andrew H. Green, J. S. T. Stranahan, Calvert Vaux, William D. Veeder, Edward F. Linton, George J. Greenfield, and F. W. Devos. George William Curtis had been invited to attend the meeting, but he sent this letter instead:

"I am highly honored by the invitation of the commission of inquiry to attend the meeting on Monday morning, and greatly regret my inability personally to respond to it.

"There have been articles in the press of the country favorable to the project of consolidation, but I have not observed any active and vigorous discussion of the subject either in the local newspapers or in neighborly conversation.

"There is undoubtedly a general impression that our local government is susceptible of improvement, but I am not aware of any strong conviction that the municipal Government of New-York, which, according to the most intelligent authorities, is one of the worst-governed cities in the world, would probably secure such improvement.

"It is, perhaps, a question whether an increase of population of a city by increasing the extent and responsibility of its Government does not tend to greater care in the selection of its administrative officers, upon whose honesty, ability, and efficiency the excellence of the Government depends. But I suppose it is not universally agreed that the municipal Government of New-York is more honest and efficient than it was when the population was very much smaller.

"If the question of consolidation should be submitted to a popular vote in the county, and it could be shown that consolidation would lessen the taxes and give us better roads, cheaper water, and a better Police and Fire Department, I am very sure that the scheme would be warmly supported. In common with other taxpayers, I should gladly see the reasons for anticipating these good results stated with a little more definite detail than I have yet observed.

"I am, as you see, an *advocatus diaboli*, so far as asking for these reasons makes me one. Yet I do not ask as an opponent of the plan, but only as one of the many citizens in the county who have not a very pronounced opinion on the subject, but who are entirely willing to be convinced when the argument descends to particulars."

Paul H. Kretzschmar, Supervisor at Large of Kings County, sent a long communication vigorously opposing the consolidation of New-York and Brooklyn, which, he contended, would be a blow at the principle of home rule.

Lawyer Anthony R. Dyett, who lives in this city, but who owns considerable property in Brooklyn, favored consolidation. He said that he wanted to take two of his houses to illustrate how "a New-York man could be benefited by consolidation." A house of his in Sixth Street, Brooklyn, is taxed at \$6,000, (70 per cent. of actual valuation,) and the tax is \$180.69, the rate being \$3 per hundred. On this house a six-hundred-dollar rental is paid. Mr. Dyett also has a house in Seventy-eighth Street, New-York, taxed at a valuation of \$7,500. (60 per cent. of actual valuation,) and the tax is \$147.75, the rate being \$1.97. On this house a rental of \$1,000 is paid. Taking the rent as the standard of value, this shows a difference of 40 per cent. in the valuation of the property in favor of New-York. Mr. Dyett's contention was that if Brooklyn were made a part of New-York this difference in valuation would rapidly be effaced.

Gen. Henry W. Slocum said: "I am now and always have been in favor of the union of the two cities, not because it would reduce my taxes, not because I am ashamed to write Brooklyn down after my name, (which I am not,) but because I believe it would be greatly to the moral and political good of this community to unload its congested tenement population upon the unoccupied lands of Kings County." Consolidation, six bridges over the East River, and rapid transit would bring this about, Gen. Slocum thought.

E. A. Bradford said that New-York needed salvation, and he saw it in consolidation with Brooklyn. New-York, he said, was five or six times as densely populated as London. In acres, London was eighteen times larger than New-York, but New-York was eighteen times harder to get around in. Acre for acre, London would forever be able to accommodate a denser population than New-York, and the only hope that New-York had of ever competing with London was in adding to its area.

President Green then presented a draft of a bill to be introduced at Albany to bring about the desired consolidation, and the commission declared in favor of the bill. It provides for the incorporation of the city of New-York, the county of Kings, county of Richmond, the town of Westchester, and portions of the towns of East Chester and Pelham, Long Island City, the towns of Newtown, Flushing, Jamaica, and part of the town of Hempstead into one great city.

The commission adjourned until 11 o'clock next Monday morning.